WASHINGTON CITY, May 28.

Copy of a letter from Commodore Rodgers to the Secretary of the Navy.

United States Frigate President off Sandy Hook, 23d May 1811.

SIR,

I regret extremely being under the necessity of respresenting to you an event that occured on the night of the 16th inst. between the ship under my command and his Britannic majesty's ship of war the Little Belt, commanded by Captain Bingham: the result of which has given me much pain, as well on account of the injury she sustained, as that I should have been compelled to the measure that produced it, by a vessel of her inferior force. The circumstances are as follows: On the 16th inst. at twenty five minutes past Meridian, in seventeen fathom water, Cape Henry bearing S. W. distant fourteen or fifteen leagues, a sail was discovered from our mast head in the East, standing towards us under a press of sail. At half past one the symmetry of her upper sails (which were at this time distinguishable from our deck; and her making signals, shewed her to be a man of war. At forty five minutes past one P. M. hoisted our ensign and pendant; when, finding her signals not answered, she wore and stood to the Southward. Being desirous of speaking her, and of ascertaining what she was, I now made sail in chace; and by half past three, P. M. found we were coming up with her; as by this time the upper part of her stern began to shew itself above the horizon. The wind now began, and continued gradually to decrease, so as to prevent my being able to approach her before sunset, to discover her actual force, (which the position she preserved during the chace was calculated to conceal) or to judge even to what nation she belonged; as she appeared studiously to decline shewing her colors. At fifteen or twenty minutes past seven, P. M. the chased took in her studding sails, and soon after hauled up her courses, and hauled by the wind on the starboard tack; she at the same time hoisted an ensign or flag at the mizen peak; but it was too dark for me to discover what nation it represented: now for the first time her broadside was presented to our view; but night had so far progressed, that although her appearance indicated a frigate, I was unable to determine her actual force.

At fifteen minutes before eight, P. M being about a mile and a half from her, the wind at the time very light, I directed captain Ludlow to take a position to windward of her and on the same tack, within short speaking distance. This however the commander of the chase appeared from his manœuvres to be anxious to prevent, as he wore and hauled by the wind on different tacks four times successively between this period and the time of our arriving at the position, which I had ordered to be taken. At fifteen or twenty minutes past eight, being a little forward of her weather beam, and distant from seventy to a hundred yards, I hailed, "what ship is that?" to this enquiry no answer was given, but I was hailed by her commander and asked, "what ship is that?"—Having asked the first question, I of course considered myself entitled by the common rules of politeness to the first answer; after a pause of fifteen or twenty seconds, I reiterated my first enquiry of "what ship is that?" and before I had time to take the trumpet from my mouth, was answered by a shot, that cut off one of our maintop-mast breast back stays and went into our mainmast—at this instant capt. Caldwell (of marines) who was standing very near to me on the gangway having observed, "sir, she has fired at us," caused me to pause for a moment just as I was in the act of giving an order to fire a shot in return; and before I had time to resume the repetition of the intended order, a shot was actually fired from the second division of this ship; and was scarcely out of the gun before it was answered from our assumed enemy by three others in quick succession, and soon after the rest of his broadside and musketry. When the first shot was fired, being under an impression, that it might possibly have proceeded from accident & without the orders of her commander, I had determined at the moment to fire only a single shot in return, but the immediate repetition of the previous unprovoked outrage induced me to believe that the insult was premeditated, and that from our adversary being at the time as ignorant of our real force as I was of his, he thought this, perhaps, a favourable opportunity of acquiring promotion, although at the expence of violating our neutrality and insulting our flag: I accordingly with that degree of repugnance incident to feeling equally determined neither to be the aggressor, nor to suffer the flag of my country to be insulted with impunity, gave a general order to fire; the effect of which, in from four to six minutes, as near as I can judge, having produced a partial silence of his guns, I gave orders to cease firing, discovering by the feeble opposition that it must be a ship of very inferior force to what I had supposed, or that some untoward accident had happened to her.

My orders in this instance however (although they proceeded alone from motives of humanity and a determination not to spill a drop of blood unnecessarily) I had in less than four minutes some reason to regret, as he renewed his fire, of which two 32 pound shot cut off one of our fore shrouds & injured our foremast. It was now that I found myself under the painful necessity of giving orders for a repetition of our fire against a force which my forbearance alone had enabled to do us any injury of moment; our fire was accordingly renewed and continued from three to five minutes longer, when perceiving our opponent's gaff and colors down, his maintop-sail yard upon the cap and his fire silenced, although it was so dark that I could not discern any other particular injury we had done or how far he was in a situation to do us farther harm—I nevertheless embraced the earliest moment to stop our fire and prevent the further effusion of blood. Here a pause of a minute or more took place, at the end of which, our adversary not shewing a further disposition to fire, I hailed and again asked "What ship is that?" I learned, for the first time, that it was a ship of his Britannic majesty's; but, owing to its blowing rather fresher than it had done, I was unable to learn her name. After having informed her commander of the name of this ship, I gave orders to wear, run under his lee and haul by the wind on the star-board tack, and heave to under topsails and repair what little injury we had sustained in our rigging which was accordingly executed, and we continued lying to on different tacks with a number of lights displayed, in order that our adversary might the better discern our position, and command our assistance, in case he found it necessary during the night. At day light on the 17th, he was discovered several miles to leeward, when I gave orders to bear up and run down to him under easy sail; after hailing him I sent a boat on board with Lieut. Creighton, to learn the names of the ship and her commander, with directions to ascertain the damage she had sustained, and to inform her commander, I much regretted the necessity on my part, which had led to such an unhappy result; at the same time to offer all the assistance that the ship under my command afforded, in repairing the damages she had sustained. At nine A. M. Lieut. Creighton returned with information, that it was his Britannic majesty's ship Little Belt, commanded by capt. Bingham; who, in a *polite manner* declined the acceptance of any assistance; saying, at the same time, that he had on board all the necessary requisites to repair the damages, sufficiently to enable him to return to Halifax.

This however was not the most unpleasant part of capt. Bingham's communication to lieut. Creighton, as he informed him, that in addition to the injury his ship had sustained, between 20 and 30 of his crew had been killed and wounded.

The regret that this information caused me, was such, you may be sure, as a man might be expected to feel, whose greatest pride is to prove, without ostentation, by every public as well as private act, that he possesses a humane and generous heart; and with these sentiments believe me, sir, that such a communication would cause me the most acute pain during the remainder of my life, had I not the consolation to know that there was no alternative left me between such a sacrifice, and one which would have been still greater, namely, to have remain'd a passive spectator of insult to the flag of my country whilst it was confided to my protection—and I would have you to be convinced, sir, that however much individually I may previously have had reason to feel incensed at the repeated outrages committed on our flag by British ships of war, neither my passions nor prejudices had any agency in this affair.

To my country, I am well convinced of the importance of the transaction which has imposed upon me the necessity of making you this communication; I must, therefore, from motives of delicacy, connected with personal considerations, solicit that you will be pleased to request the President to authorise a formal enquiry to be instituted into all the circumstances as well as into every part of my conduct connected with the same.

The injury sustained by the ship under my command is very trifling, excepting to the fore and main masts, which I before mentioned; no person killed, and but one (a boy) wounded.

For further particulars I refer you to captain Caldwell, who is charged with the delivery of this communication.

I have the honor to be, with great respect, sir, your obedient servant,

(Signed) JOHN ROGERS.

Hon. Paul Hamilton, Sec. of the Navy.

The mystery involved in the contradictory rumours respecting the late firing off the Capes is at length solved by commodore Rogers' letter to the Secretary of the Navy. Whilst we must lament so great a slaughter occasioned by a misapprehension on the part of the aggressor, we cannot but applaud the spirit and promptitude with which the Commodore resented the insult which was offered to his flag.

It is understood that commodore Roger's orders required him to proceed to sea immediately from Annapolis, and resume his former station, cruizing along the coast, as before, for the purpose of guarding our maritime jurisdiction from violation by foreign cruizers.

FROM THE NATIONAL INTELLIGENCER.

To the People of the United States.

It is the high and genuine felicity of this country, that it possesses *the advantage of a free press*, as well to defend as to assail the country. The government can happily be vindicated by truth and reason, by means of the press, as surely as it may be attacked in the same way, through error or passion. Whenever the people do not receive a right ultimate impression through the press, it is because the requisite explanations have been omitted or suppressed.—Every man then should contribute his *mite* through the medium of the press.

It is astonishing that any part of an intelligent people, like those of the Eastern states, and like our mercantile citizens, should so entirely misconceive their situation and interests as not to see, in our present laws against British *manufactures, navigation* and *commerce*, a mere and exact reciprocation of some of the numerous exclusions and restrictions to which Great Britain has rigidly subjected this country, ever since the consummation of our independence.—We now, in peaceable pursuit of bread at home, and to throw upon them some of the evils of their usurping executive legislation for us, have determined to exclude all their *manufactures* from our markets & our consumption. During the twenty-eight years which have elapsed since the treaty of peace, and even during our time as colonies, the British laws excluded all our manufactures, and even forbad our rolling mills and other labor-saving machinery. So as to foreign produce and manufactures—Great Britain has always rejected and does now exclude from her ports all goods of the produce or manufacture of other countries, when shipt to her even to pay our debts, and in *her own vessels*. And we, desirous peaceably to encourage our foreign trade, and to prevent her exclusive and eager monopoly, have ordained, that no foreign goods shall come to us from her ports in any vessels. The leaf is actually from the British statute book.

Is this injurious or insulting in us to Great Britain? Then has she since 1803 steadily insulted and deeply injured us. Will the merchants and marines, and mercantile towns and districts of the United States complain of a measure of mere reciprocity, precedented by Britain, and proved by her own ancient statutes? Will the manufacturers of the United States complain that the *impressers* of our seafaring brethren are no longer allowed to rival their manufactures in our markets, by goods made too often out of raw materials taken by lawless force out of our vessels in fair voyages, in virtue (or rather through the vice) of those royal counterfeits, called paper blockades?

The sightest consideration of the state of things between the U. S. and the British kingdom will evince that she sustains no indignity—no injury from our laws. For she has only to govern herself by her own asssertions and admissions that "*all ships of war and courts of admiralty are bound to act and judge by the law of nations and treaties*,* and our momentary interdictions of her manufactures and trade will be at an end. But mark the inequality.—*All* her interdictions of our manufactures and trade will remain, though Britain fulfils our demands. Britain is not asked to relax her interdictions of our manufactures. Ought not this to content her? Ought not this to silence the unthinking part of our merchant? Ought not this to still the unreflecting agitators of our Eastern brethren? Do they desire that the British judge of the admiralty, smiling at the ruin of our trade, and the prostrate rights of our country, may continue criminally, and without shame or remorse, to pronounce that "*the text of his king's instructions is the rule of his court*" for the confiscation of our property? Are they willing that twenty years of depredation, under the sanction of the degenerate admiralty court of G. Britain, could not work up France by series of wrounds and examples to the same irregularities, insanities, and crime, if the voyage of the moment or the commerce of the year may only be "*permitted*?" It is pretended that the people of the British kingdoms would not bear the restrictions on trade that Congress has made.

Let us examine into the state of these British restrictions. They have confined the trade to *one* East company, tho' the countries beyond the Cape of Good Hope, whose commerce is confined to that company, are peopled by hundreds of millions of persons. They have confined all corporate banking to *one* company for England, Scotland and Wales and to *one* other for Ireland.—No other company can exceed a house or firm of trade of five persons, or have the benefit of an incorporation. They prohibit the importation of all our manufactures by their merchants, and nearly all other manufactures made by other nations. They have nearly prohibited their merchants to import Spanish, French and other wines, except Portuguese. They prohibit the trade in Lotteries, except one immense government Lottery.

They prohibit their merchants from importing for use any sugars or coffee or molasses from foreign countries.—They prohibit the exportation of money. They prohibit to their own merchants the exportation of arms even to this neutral country. They prohibit their merchants from importing foreign goods from any country, but that which produced or manufactured them. They prohibit their merchants from bringing cheap vessels from foreign countries. They prevent their merchants from employing their sailors in their ships or privateers, or the sailors from getting fair wages, by impressing those sailors into their navy at very low wages. In fine they have a permanent system of commercial restraints, prohibitions and coercions incomparably more serious, strict and complicated than our *temporary* regulations, which are intended to produce the restoration of our commercial rights. It is impossible for the United States longer to suffer the following evils without a firm and steadfast resistance or opposition—

1st. The impressment of persons out of our vessels.

2d. The practice of counterfeiting blockades.

3d. The practice of orders in council, derogating from neutral rights.

4th. The practice of injuring our trade, for the conduct of enemies on the plea of retaliation on an enemy, though the measure is not a retaliation, and tho' Britain herself led to it, by priority of aggression.

5th. The conversion of the British prize courts from *tribunals* of examination, trial & judgment, on the grounds of fixed and known laws, into *executive offices* of seizure and confiscation, acting sometimes too, as in the case of the odious order of November 1793, on *secret* instructions.

6th. The open seduction of our citizens to violate our laws, as in the case of the royal invitation and the practice under the embargo law; and the colonial operations from Canada and Nova Scotia.

7th. *The destruction of the sales of our crops* in foreign markets by unlawful interruptions, and monstrous coercive and pecuniary exactions.

8th. The attempt to monopolize the supplying of this country with manufactures by preventing the importation of the manufactures of nearly all other countries of Europe.

9th. The destructions of our credit on the continent of Europe by stopping our lawful shipments, intended to pay our debts, in various countries.

10th. The embarrassment of our finances, by lawlessly seizing our cargoes on their way from foreign countries to our custom houses.

In the season of preparation for the American war and revolution, a duty of three pence and other such unlawful acts of the British Legislature called forth *a non-importation agreement* to resist those things and the principles on which they were founded. What difference in our favor is there between the old act of the British parliament to bind us, unrepresented, in all cases whatever, and the shocking operations of the British government, stated in the above ten particular instances and in several others which might be added? A law against the importation of their rival manufactures (two thirds of which or the qualities of which are undeniably luxuries) is surely a just, a mild, a decorous, tho' an efficacious resistance of their misconduct. Two things are certain. *The one:* that G. Britain has *brought* our commercial interdictions upon herself. *The other:* that G. Britain *keeps* our commercial interdictions upon herself. Let her be decorous, subordinate to law, and just, and our interdictions will be at an end.

In regard to France, it cannot be doubted, that she will continue her title to an ordinary commerce by fulfilling the duties which resulted from her prospective repeal of her decrees in Nov. or she also will lose the benefits of that commerce. We cannot know the complete result, so as to ascertain our proper conduct in her case, till we learn officially, what was her deportment on the receipt of our law of March last. But the injuries from Britain being actual and monstrous, and, in truth, no longer sufferable, we have acted very decently and moderately in cultivating our own manufactures in lieu of the foreign commerce *she violently suspends*, and in prohibiting to her in due form of rightful law the benefits of that trade, which, since the month of March, 1793, she has "used all her endeavors"† to lessen & destroy.

MODESTUS.

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* See the case of the Silesia Loan.

† See the treaty of that date between Britain & Russia, and the similar treaties with Austria, Prussia and Spain.

FROM THE DELAWARE WATCHMAN.

ROYAL CIRCULAR.

[ANTICIPATED.]

Secret instructions from Halifax.

GEORGE IIId. By the Grace of God, &c. &c.

To his majesty's officers, servants, editors of newspapers, &c. &c. and to all his loving and faithful subjects, whomsoever, whatsoever, and wheresoever, now resident in the United States of America, and the territories thereof—these presents come greeting:—

Whereas, his majesty's sloop of war Little Belt, did on the night of the 16th inst. in lat. 38, 50, off Cape Henlopen, hail and fire at the U. States frigate President—and whereas, Commodore Rodgers commandant of said frigate, did not only refuse to make the requisite obedience due to the flag of a great and mighty prince; but without having the fear of God, and the sovereign of the seas before his eyes, did there and then return the shot of his majesty's sloop of war, giving broadside for broadside, till thirty of our seamen were killed and our sloop so shattered that she was compelled to *strike* to the said Rogers. His majesty considers such resistance to the commands of his officers, a most daring outrage on his sovereignty, and just cause for war: yet his majesty, ever considering the welfare of his subjects and servants in the United States; who, fired by the holy zeal of love and attachment to his majesty's sacred person, have contributed so *much* to the success of his majesty's cause in America; and who, from time to time have so zealously cooperated in the maintenance of his majesty's honor, and in the support of his majesty's crown; that for their sakes he will in this instance be actuated by a spirit of forbearance. But with a view of better promoting his majesty's glorious cause, and giving effect to the plan of overturning the jacobinic system, pursued by the present rulers of the United States, and for the purpose of putting his majesty's loyal and virtuous servants into their places; it is specially enjoined upon all his majesty's printers, that they will make the best of this affair: turn every circumstance to the advantage of his majesty; and as the "end in all cases justifies the means," it is easy to deceive and mislead the credulous and unthinking part of mankind; therefore, they must in bold & energetic language, deny if necessary, that Rodgers hailed his majesty's sloop at all; but out of a malicious spirit of bloody revenge, as soon as he came within gun-shot of his majesty's sloop, he the said Rogers, without any provocation on the part of Capt. Bingham, did then and there wickedly and wantonly fire a broadside into his majesty's sloop, thereby killing and slaying thirty of his majesty's seamen.—As his majesty has always been desirous of measuring to all nations exact justice, and has ever been ready to make "immediate and spontaneous reparation" for all depredations committed by his officers on the *rights* of neutrals, his majesty trusts that the government of the United States will see the necessity of making prompt & ample satisfaction for this daring encroachment on the sovereignty of the seas.—His majesty's editors, viz. *Repertory Gazette, Palladium, and Centinel*, Boston *Evening Post, Lang's Gazette*, New-York; *Relf's and U. S. Gazette, Philadelphia, Fed. Republican, and Fed. Gazette, Baltimore, &c. &c. &c.* are hereby ordered and commanded to reiterate the foregoing sentiments, in order that his majesty's honor and the dignity of his crown may in no shape be called in question.

BOGARDUS QUIZORUM.

Halifax, May 22, 1811.

N. B. His majesty relies with confidence on the unabated zeal of his printers, and he assures them that all arrearages will be paid before the fourth of June. QUIZORUM.

The amount of exports from Canada, disbursements and freights at Quebec, during the year 1810, exclusive of those to the U. S. via St. John's, and the exports from the departments of Gaspe and the bay of Chaleurs, is stated at 2,357,387*l.* 18*s.* 10*d.* sterling; exports alone, at 1062827*l.* 18*s.* 10*d.* sterling. The amount of imports into Quebec during the same periods is stated at 972,837*l.* sterl. The number of vessels cleared out from that port in 1810 was, amounting to 138,057 tons, and 26 new ships built, making an addition of 5836 tons, amounting in the whole to 661 ships averaging 216 tons each, which in the aggregate amount to 143,839 tons of British shipping employed in that province during the last year. This is given in the English prints, to shew the importance, to G. Britain, of Canada, in a commercial point of view. *Balt. Amer.*